

Message Text

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21-12

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FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8139

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 4096

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MU PFOR

SUBJ: REPLACEMENT OMAN FOREIGN MINISTER AND AMBASSADOR TO US

1. MINISTER OF STATE FONAFF SAYYID FAHAD TOLD QUINLAN AND ME NOV 17 THAT SULTAN QABOOS HAD ASKED HIM TRANSFER TO INFORMATION MINISTRY AND HAD DECIDED APPOINT QAIS ZAWAWI REPLACE HIM. SAID ALSO SAYYID FAISAL, WHOM MINISTRY PROPOSES TO REPLACE IN WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK WITH AHMAD MAKKI (SEPTTEL) WILL BE MINISTER OF EDUCATION--POSITION NOW HELD TEMPORARILY BY KHALFAN BIN NASSIR, WHO IS ALSO MINISTER LABOR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS.

2. ZAWAWI APPOINTMENT IS SURPRISE, TO SAY LEAST. QAIS IS YOUNG (EARLY THIRTIES) IBADHI MUSLIM BUSINESSMAN, BOMBAY EDUCATED, NOT KNOWN TO HAVE POLITICAL LEANINGS OR AMBITIONS ALTHOUGH HE IS ONE OF DOZEN MUSCAT BUSINESS LEADERS PROBABLY CLOSEST TO SULTAN QABOOS. ZAWAWI'S ARE AMONG OLDEST AND WEALTHIEST OMANI BUSINESS FAMILY WHICH INCLUDES HARVARD-EDUCATED MD RESIDENT IN BEIRUT, ANOTHER BROTHER REPRESENTING FAMILY BUSINESS IN KUWAIT, SISTER MARRIED TO BRITISHER IN LONDON AND ANOTHER SISTER MARRIED TO AMERICAN AND LIVING IN INDIANAPOLIS. QAIS HAS TWO OR THREE CHILDREN AND WIFE WHOM HE TOOK TO INDIANAPOLIS LAST SUMMER TO LEARN ENGLISH--WITH SOME SUCCESS. QAIS HIMSELF IS BILINGUAL ENGLISH AND ARABIC. QAIS AND BROTHER DR. OMAR ARE AMONG VERY FEW OMANI'S WHO EVER ENTERTAIN WESTERNERS IN OWN HOME; QAIS THOROUGHLY ENJOYS AND SEEKS OUT BRITISH AND AMERICAN COMPANY, CONFIDENTIAL

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DRINKS AND SMOKES MODERATELY. QAIS REPRESENTED ZAWAWI FAMILY

INTERESTS IN LONG AND DIFFICULT NEGOTIATIONS FOR LEASE AND RECONSTRUCTION ZAWAWI HOUSE FOR EMBASSY MUSCAT CHANCERY AND RESIDENCE AND CHARGE QUINLAN FOUND HIM PATIENT, CAREFUL NEGOTIATOR AND REASONABLE ALTHOUGH NOT GENEROUS LANDLORD. (NEA/EX PLEASE NOTE THAT SECOND OF OUR THREE MUSCAT LANDLORDS IS AHMAD MAKKI, NOW AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON).

3. APPOINTMENT SHOULD BE NET GAIN FOR US; WE CAN EXPECT QABOOS MAKE ALL BASIC DECISIONS AS IN PAST AND PROBABLY CONTINUE TO USE SAUDI CONFIDANT, GHASSAN SHAKIR, AS PRINCIPAL ADVISOR AND COMPANION IN RELATIONS WITH ARAB STATES BUT AS DAY TO DAY MANAGER AND SPOKESMAN QAIS ZAWAWI HAS GREATER POTENTIAL THAN SAYYID FAHAD.
STOLTZFUS

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